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COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. This report has been prepared in response to paragraph 17 of decision F (47).

2. In the light of recent political and economic changes in the region and the provisions of Commission decision O (45), the Inland Transport Committee at its fifty-fifth session agreed on the draft revised terms of reference for submission to the Commission (ECE/TRANS/97, Annex II).

3. As a follow-up to the Pan-European Transport Conference (Prague, October 1991), the ECE secretariat participated, together with the European Parliament, the European Community (EC) and international organizations, in the elaboration of a European Transport Charter and in the preparation of a Second Pan-European Transport Conference to be held in early 1994.

4. The secretariat continued to participate in meetings of the EC and of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and in high-level intersecretariat meetings in 1992 with a view to avoiding duplication of work and making optimal use of resources.

LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

5. The importance of the ECE international agreements, conventions and resolutions for the achievement of a coherent, efficient and well-balanced all-European transport system was increasingly recognized. Work continued and progress was made on the elaboration, administration and updating of those ECE legal instruments, in particular the 1968 Global Convention on Road Signs and

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Signals and the 1971 European Agreement supplementing it, which were revised in 1992.

6. In the field of facilitation of international road transport, new amendments to the European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) and the revision of the consolidated Resolution on the Facilitation of Road Transport (R.E.4) were finalized.

7. The European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) will be reconsidered in order to examine possible improvement of technical and operational parameters of international roads, taking into account safety and environmental aspects. Similarly, arrangements were made to study the situation regarding the application of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) in member countries and to examine the existing AGC network with a view to keeping the Agreement up to date.

8. A new classification of European inland waterways was adopted in 1992 which will facilitate the construction in Europe of a coherent and modern inland water transport infrastructure network. This will be the subject of a European Agreement (AGN) similar to those established for road, rail and combined transport.

9. With regard to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), which has so far been signed by 18 Governments and ratified by 5, provisions relating to combined transport on inland waterways were elaborated and, pending their incorporation into either the AGTC or the yet to be prepared AGN, adopted as the Resolution on the Development of Combined Transport on Inland Waterways.

10. The draft of a new Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers used in International Transport has also been finalized and will be brought to the attention of all ECE Governments, the EC and international organizations concerned for comments.

11. The European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) continued to be amended in 1992. A new version of the ADR containing the amendments adopted in 1991 was published. Following the intention of the EC to apply ADR within the Community, which means the official recognition of the ADR as the sole reference legal instrument in the EC and EFTA countries, the ADR will be restructured.

12. Progress was made in the elaboration of the provisions on the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN), which should be finalized in 1993.

13. Work on regulations concerning the transport of dangerous goods also led to the eighth revision of the multimodal UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, which will be published in 1993 and which will be widely followed in all modal international agreements such as ADR, RID, ADN, IMDG Code, ICAO Technical Instructions and IATA Regulations.

14. The work on the revision of the 1958 Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions of Approval and Reciprocal Recognition of Approval for Motor Vehicle Equipment and Parts of 1958, with a view to its worldwide application and to the rationalization of the legal and administrative procedures, also advanced in 1992.

15. Also in the field of standards for road vehicles, an important contribution to reducing the negative environmental aspects of transport was made by aligning the exhaust emission limits and testing requirements in the ECE with the more stringent Directives of the European Community, both for private cars and for diesel-engined commercial vehicles, including the dates of entry into force. In total, forty-four out of the ninety ECE Regulations relevant to the construction of cars and annexed to the 1958 Agreement are considered equivalent to the various EC Directives. The equivalence of other Regulations is being considered for motor cycles and motor vehicles which were not yet included in the scope of the respective EC Framework Directives.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

16. In addition to the work on the existing infrastructure Agreements as described above, e.g. AGR, AGC and AGTC, the implementation of transport infrastructure projects progressed satisfactorily. The Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) network was revised so as to include east-west connections. The TEM programme of work, foreseeing the completion of this motorway network, concentrates on the new layout and its construction programme and the technical and operational issues leading to this goal. Under the TEM Trust Fund Agreement signed between the participating Governments and ECE, the ECE is the Executing Agency, with project Governments contributing to the fund to finance project activities.

17. The Trans-European Railways (TER) project, which is aimed at developing a coherent and efficient rail and combined transport system among central and east European countries and between those countries and other European countries, also made progress. The TER network was revised to include east-west connections, and possibilities for development of combined transport were explored. For the TER Project a Trust Fund Agreement has been operational since 1 January 1993 under the same conditions as for TEM.

18. Pursuant to Council Resolution 1991/74, the ECE and the Economic Commission for Africa are cooperating on the preparation of an evaluation report on the studies relating to the Gibraltar Straits Project made in the period 1982-1993.

19. As a follow-up to the Volos Seminar (June 1991) and to the Pan-European Transport Conference (October 1991), bottlenecks and missing links in the transport infrastructure network of the ECE member countries are being identified which could indicate how existing infrastructure networks may be improved.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

20. Following the first Road Safety Week in the ECE region (October 1990) a Seminar on Road Safety was held on 23-24 March 1992. The Seminar assessed

positively the results of the road safety campaign. The Committee adopted a resolution launching the preparatory work for the second Road Safety Week to be held in early 1995 and which will target young road-users.

21. A global Seminar on the Impact of Increasing Dimensions of Loading Units on Combined Transport was held from 1 to 4 September 1992. On the basis of the recommendations of the Seminar, the Committee adopted resolution No. 241 on that subject.

22. In the field of rail transport, an ad hoc intersecretariat group was created with the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the International Union of Railways (UIC) in order to study problems and propose measures for the facilitation of border crossing in international transport. The ad hoc group has identified a number of border stations on determined rail lines, at which it has undertaken a detailed analysis of those factors which cause delays in international rail traffic. The work of the ad hoc group will be completed in 1993.

23. In the field of inland water transport regulations, as a result of a compromise worked out during many years, an agreement has been reached on unified requirements for the issuance of boatmaster's licences with a view to their reciprocal recognition in international transport by inland waterways and on ships certificates.

24. The transport situation in central and east European countries which are in transition to a market economy is characterized by a number of difficulties. Therefore, reform processes in the field of transport in transition countries will be studied in order to establish an inventory of the changes underway, particularly the regulatory and institutional aspects.

25. The following workshops were held on transition issues in the field of inland transport:

- Responsibilities of the State and the Railways in a Market Economy (Rouen, France, 30 June-2 July 1992)

- Road Transport Safety (Benesov, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, 6-9 October 1992)

- Workshops on combined transport took place in Moscow (Russian Federation, 21-22 October 1992) and in Bonn, (Germany, 6-9 October 1992)

26. The United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the text of the ADR and the TIR Handbook are now available to external users on diskette.

27. A data base and electronic mail system has been tested with respect to the Regulations on the Construction of Vehicles and will later be extended to the Transport of Dangerous Goods. The secretariat will keep the system under review in the light of the results of the tests so as to improve its performance.